

УДК 378

## **Additional Qualification Course “Translator/Interpreter in the Field of Professional Communication”: Problems and Prospects**

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*The research paper is devoted to studying the problems of additional qualification course “Translator/Interpreter in the Field of Professional Communication”. Being successfully implemented in various universities of the Russian Federation the course, which is popular among students and professionals and important within the aspect of Lifelong Learning, arises some questions requiring solutions. Answering the questions that arise in the process of the course implementation the author provides ways for the problems solutions, found and discussed with the colleagues within the frames of conference on Lifelong Learning.*

*Keywords: additional qualification course; translator/interpreters’ training; Lifelong Learning; for-profit education.*

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### **Introduction**

One of the current and popular trends of for-profit education industry nowadays is additional qualification course “Translator/Interpreter in the Field of Professional Communication”. There is interest to the course shown by university students and graduates, who want to obtain additional university degree in the field of translation/interpretation. The course is of commercial success in the large number of Russian universities and its successful implementation and student satisfaction are important for the universities and departments implementing the course.

### **Point of View**

Additional qualification course “Translator/Interpreter in the Field of Professional Communication” is widely implemented in numerous universities from the early 2000s. For more than a decade it has undergone significant changes both of organizational and methodical nature. However, the aim of the course has been and remains its focus on training specialists with professional translation skills that allow them to translate to/from the foreign language enabling them to carry out cross-cultural professional communication under conditions of increasing

globalization of production, economy, society and education in general; effectively work with the sources of journalistic, popular scientific and scientific and technical literature in the English language; to translate and quite often interpret textual material with due account for specific features of the students’ professional activity.

The main reasons that contribute to the educational course popularity among various categories of attendees from students and post-graduate students to professionals with higher education are as follows:

- firstly, it is reconsideration, awareness and acceptance of the role of the English language as a mean of intercultural professional communication for getting and continuing education in the foreign language environment;
- secondly, it is willingness and conscious need of the attendee to manifest themselves as cultural linguistic personalities, able to carry out cross-cultural interaction in everyday communication under conditions of direct contact with native speakers; business communication, in particular, execution and carrying out business correspondence, and finally, professionally-oriented communication in the process of work with information resources in the English language and collaboration with foreign colleagues;
- thirdly, it is personally-determined willingness to master the profession of translator/interpreter, while focusing on excellent knowledge of the field of science or industry in which the student specializes.

According to the translators/interpreters training course curriculum, all the subjects should be mastered for 1 500 – 1690 hours, 826 of which are provided for the students’ individual independent work. The course duration is five

terms. Despite a relatively short period of time and integrated character of the didactic purpose set, the course is designed in such a way as to simultaneously achieve three objectives:

1) Create favorable conditions for combining students’ major educational course or work with the course evening classes;

2) Allow students to take a break in training, if it required by the circumstances, such as academic failure, personal circumstances, financial problems, etc.;

3) Make education process as individualized and student-centered as possible: students should be able to monitor the level of professional competence in translation/interpretation to/from the foreign language at all the stages of training and to correlate it with the final requirements of the course.

The course gives opportunity to get a state-recognized diploma on getting additional qualification that gives possibility to work professionally as translator/interpreter in the field of professional communication (for university students simultaneously with the degree in basic specialty). It allows not only improving the knowledge of another language, but mastering the techniques of professional translation/interpretation as well. In quite a short period, students can acquire the necessary theoretical and practical translation/interpretation skills and oral communication practice that could help them in their professional activities.

The course objectives are:

- training specialists in the field of specialized translation in order to improve professional language skills;
- development of professional skills in translation/interpretation;
- deepen knowledge about the culture of the studied language;
- improve cross-cultural communication efficiency in professional sphere.

Target audience of the course:

- university undergraduates (starting from the 2nd year of education);
- postgraduates;
- graduates: economists, lawyers, humanities (public relations, social work, psychology and pedagogy), technical specialists (information systems).

The course is successfully implemented in many (if not virtually all) Russian universities, with various modifications, thorough study of a specific subject area, modular approach to training, etc. Some courses, implemented in universities do not require any translation/interpretation practice, in some universities it is necessary, and one university that implements the course offers students a 5-week internship at one of the British universities with getting certificate when it is successfully finished.

The course has both supporters and opponents (EFL..., 2015; Lingvo..., 2015), and the amount of positive and negative reviews is almost the same. There are still some issues in the course implementation that require discussion, since the purpose of any research is not only problem statement, but trying to find ways for its solution.

One of the most often repeated negative comments by the students about the course (ABBYY LINGVO..., 2015) are:

1. They don't have specialized English language course.
2. A large number of subjects “unrelated” with their specialization, such as:
  - theory of the studied language;
  - culture the studied language;
  - stylistics of the Russian language and culture of speech.
3. Lack of real language practice.

Lecturers, professors and professional translators/interpreters who teach at the course

are faced with the following modern education facts:

- For-profit nature of the course that sometimes influences the course negatively. Although it is stated that the future students of the course are pre-tested and their language level must be not lower than B1 (Moscow..., 2015), often have much lower level. In the case when the course students do not have sufficient language competence, have poor knowledge of grammar and vocabulary, it is not possible to teach them translation/interpretation. Thus, classes of professional translation/interpretation are turned into English lessons, where students are taught grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, etc. However, in case of rigorous selection, the number of students is often less than necessary.
- Teaching staff involved in the course implementation varies in different universities from high school lecturers – English teachers to professional translators/interpreters.
- Evaluation of the professional level of the course graduates. In some cases assessment of successful completion of the course includes only exams and final testing, in others translation/interpretation practice, as well as employers' reviews.

The most important question asked in this respect is how all the problems are to be overcome to provide successful course implementation? Should those students who had English level lower than B1 be enrolled in the course and be given additional qualification of translator/interpreter? And finally: who have to teach at the course: specialists in the field of translation/interpretation or English language teachers who are not specialists in translation?

All these issues are important for the successful course implementation and high professional level of the graduates.

It is undoubtful that the course is important not only for the students who want to get additional qualification but also for the specialists, and even for professional interpreters, who face problems with the legal status of their translations if they don't have a degree or diploma/certificate in translation.

As for the second question raised, a large number of professionals who took part in the course implementation believe that students' pre-testing is important, as it is useless teaching translation students with low language proficiency. Besides, students who attend the course specialize in different subjects, thus, it is difficult to adjust the course for such a varied audience. The solution proposed is to enroll the students of the same specialization, or form several student groups depending on their specialization. Such an approach could, probably, result in reduction of the number of students, but definitely increase translation/interpretation skills quality of the graduates, the aspect which is the most important for the employers.

Another question concerns academic staff that works with the students directly and provides the course success. Taking into account the fact that students are taught translation/interpretation it is necessary to have professional translators who teach at the course. It does not mean, however, that other academic staff shouldn't be involved. They can teach other subjects, but teaching translation/interpretation should be done by the professionals who specialize/translate in this field.

### **Resume**

Taking into account all the factors and difficulties that arise in the process of the course implementation it goes without saying that the course is important both for students and universities, as gives possibility to improve language proficiency and get additional qualification and state-recognized diploma for the first and attract more students for the popular for-profit course for the latter. All the problems that the course faces and cause students dissatisfaction could be solved not by changing curriculum, but by changing approach to admission, final examinations and groups specialization, as well as attracting professionals translators to teaching at the course.

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**Программа дополнительной квалификации  
«Переводчик в сфере профессиональной коммуникации»:  
проблемы и перспективы**

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*Статья посвящена изучению проблем курса дополнительной квалификации «Переводчик в сфере профессиональной коммуникации». Программа успешно реализуется в различных университетах Российской Федерации, пользуется спросом у студентов вузов и дипломированных специалистов, а также важна в аспекте концепции непрерывного образования. Тем не менее программа имеет ряд проблем, требующих решения для ее успешного функционирования. Отвечая на вопросы, возникающие в курсе реализации программы, автором представлены способы их решения, которые были найдены и обсуждены с коллегами в рамках конференции, посвященной непрерывному образованию.*

*Ключевые слова: дополнительная квалификация, подготовка переводчиков, непрерывное образование, коммерческие курсы.*

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